General Assembly

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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/63/L.53 and Add.1)*]

63/141. International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, the annex to which contains the guiding principles for the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system, as well as all its resolutions on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development, and recalling the resolutions of the humanitarian segments of the substantive sessions of the Economic and Social Council,

Recognizing the importance of the principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence for the provision of humanitarian assistance,

Welcoming the Hyogo Declaration,[1] the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters[2] and the common statement of the special session on the Indian Ocean disaster: risk reduction for a safer future,[3] as adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005,

Emphasizing that the affected State has the primary responsibility in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory and in the facilitation of the work of humanitarian organizations in mitigating the consequences of natural disasters,

Emphasizing also the responsibility of all States to undertake disaster preparedness, response and early recovery efforts in order to minimize the impact of natural disasters, while recognizing the importance of international cooperation in support of the efforts of affected countries which may have limited capacities in this regard,

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[1] A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 1.

[2] Ibid., resolution 2.

[3] A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, annex II.

Expressing its deep concern at the increasing challenges to Member States and to the United Nations humanitarian response capacity presented by the consequences of natural disasters, including the impact of climate change, and by the humanitarian implications of the current global food crisis,

Noting that local communities are the first responders in most disasters, and underlining the critical role played by in-country capacities in disaster risk reduction, including preparedness, response and recovery,

Recognizing the importance of international cooperation in support of the efforts of the affected States in dealing with natural disasters in all their phases, in particular in preparedness, response and the early recovery phase, and of strengthening the response capacity of countries affected by disaster,

Noting with appreciation the important role played by Member States, including developing countries, that have granted necessary and continued generous assistance to countries and peoples stricken by natural disasters,

Recognizing the significant role played by national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, as part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in disaster preparedness and risk reduction, disaster response, rehabilitation and development,

Emphasizing the importance of addressing vulnerability and integrating risk reduction into all phases of natural disaster management, post-natural disaster recovery and development planning,

Recognizing that efforts to achieve economic growth, sustainable development and internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, can be adversely affected by natural disasters, and noting the positive contribution that those efforts can make in strengthening the resilience of populations to such disasters,

Emphasizing, in this context, the important role of development organizations in supporting national efforts to mitigate the consequences of natural disasters,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[4]

2. *Expresses its deep concern* at the number and scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact, resulting in massive losses of life and property worldwide, in particular in vulnerable societies lacking adequate capacity to mitigate effectively the long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences of natural disasters;

3. *Calls upon* States to fully implement the Hyogo Declaration[1] and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters,[2] in particular those commitments related to assistance for developing countries that are prone to natural disasters and for disaster-stricken States in the transition phase towards sustainable physical, social and economic recovery, for risk-reduction activities in post-disaster recovery and for rehabilitation processes;

4. *Calls upon* all States to adopt, where required, and to continue to implement effectively, necessary legislative and other appropriate measures to mitigate the effects of natural disasters and integrate disaster risk reduction

[4] A/63/277.

strategies into development planning, and in this regard requests the international community to continue to assist developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition, as appropriate;

5. *Encourages* Member States and, where applicable, regional organizations to strengthen operational and legal frameworks for international disaster relief, taking into account, as appropriate, the Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance, adopted at the Thirtieth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held from 26 to 30 November 2007;

6. *Welcomes* the effective cooperation among the affected States, relevant bodies of the United Nations system, donor countries, regional and international financial institutions and other relevant organizations, such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and civil society, in the coordination and delivery of emergency relief, and stresses the need to continue such cooperation and delivery throughout relief operations and medium- and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, in a manner that reduces vulnerability to future natural hazards;

7. *Reiterates* the commitment to support the efforts of countries, in particular developing countries, to strengthen their capacities at all levels in order to prepare for and respond rapidly to natural disasters and mitigate their impact;

8. *Urges* Member States to develop, update and strengthen disaster preparedness and risk reduction measures at all levels, in accordance with priority five of the Hyogo Framework for Action, taking into account their own circumstances and capacities and in coordination with relevant actors, as appropriate, and encourages the international community and relevant United Nations entities to continue to support national efforts in this regard;

9. *Encourages* Member States to consider elaborating and presenting to the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction secretariat their national platforms for disaster reduction in accordance with the Hyogo Framework for Action, and also encourages States to cooperate with each other to reach this objective;

10. *Stresses* that, to increase further the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, particular international cooperation efforts should be undertaken to enhance and broaden further the utilization of national and local capacities and, where appropriate, of regional and subregional capacities of developing countries for disaster preparedness and response, which may be made available in closer proximity to the site of a disaster, and more efficiently and at lower cost;

11. *Also stresses*, in this context, the importance of strengthening international cooperation, particularly through the effective use of multilateral mechanisms, in the timely provision of humanitarian assistance through all phases of a disaster, from relief and recovery to development, including the provision of adequate resources;

12. *Takes note* that a review of the Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities, planned for 2009, is expected to assess its value added and user satisfaction, and requests the Secretary-General to report on its findings;

13. *Reaffirms* the role of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat as the focal point within the overall United Nations system for advocacy for and coordination of humanitarian assistance among United Nations humanitarian organizations and other humanitarian partners;

14. *Welcomes*, so as to increase further the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, the incorporation of experts from developing countries that are prone to natural disasters into the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination system, and the work of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group in assisting such countries in strengthening urban search and rescue capacities and establishing mechanisms for improving their coordination of national and international response in the field, and recalls in this regard its resolution 57/150 of 16 December 2002 entitled "Strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance";

15. *Recognizes* that information and telecommunication technology can play an important role in disaster response, encourages Member States to develop emergency response telecommunication capacities, and encourages the international community to assist the efforts of developing countries in this area, where needed, including in the recovery phase;

16. *Encourages* States that have not acceded to or ratified the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations,[5] to consider doing so;

17. *Encourages* the further use of space-based and ground-based remote-sensing technologies, as well as the sharing of geographical data, for the prevention, mitigation and management of natural disasters, where appropriate, and invites Member States to continue to provide their support to the consolidation of the United Nations capability in the area of satellite-derived geographical information for early warning, preparedness, response and early recovery;

18. *Encourages* Member States, relevant United Nations organizations and international financial institutions to enhance the global capacity for sustainable post-disaster recovery in areas such as coordination with traditional and non-traditional partners, identification and dissemination of lessons learned, development of common tools and mechanisms for recovery needs assessment, strategy development and programming, and incorporation of risk reduction into all recovery processes, and welcomes the ongoing efforts to this end;

19. *Encourages* Member States and relevant regional and international organizations to identify and improve the dissemination of best practices for improving disaster preparedness, response and early recovery and to scale up successful local initiatives, as appropriate;

20. *Requests* the United Nations system to improve its coordination of disaster recovery efforts, from relief to development, inter alia, by strengthening institutional, coordination and strategic planning efforts in disaster recovery, in support of national authorities;

21. *Calls upon* relevant United Nations humanitarian and development organizations, in consultation with Member States, to strengthen tools and mechanisms to ensure that early recovery needs and support are considered part of the planning and implementation of humanitarian response and development cooperation activities, as appropriate;

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[5] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2296, No. 40906.

22. *Calls upon* the United Nations system and other humanitarian actors to improve the dissemination of tools and services to support enhanced disaster risk reduction;

23. *Calls upon* relevant United Nations humanitarian and development organizations to continue efforts to ensure continuity and predictability in their response and to further improve coordination in recovery processes in support of the efforts of national authorities;

24. *Emphasizes* the need to mobilize adequate, flexible and sustainable resources for recovery, preparedness and disaster risk reduction activities;

25. *Stresses* the importance of rapid access to funds to ensure a more predictable and timely United Nations response to humanitarian emergencies, and welcomes in this regard the achievements of the Central Emergency Response Fund and its contribution to the promotion and enhancement of early humanitarian response;

26. *Calls upon* all Member States and invites the private sector and all concerned individuals and institutions to consider increasing voluntary contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund, and emphasizes that contributions should be additional to current commitments to humanitarian programming and not to the detriment of resources made available for international cooperation for development;

27. *Invites* Member States, the private sector and all concerned individuals and institutions to consider voluntary contributions to other humanitarian funding mechanisms;

28. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to improve the international response to natural disasters and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, and to include in his report, within existing resources, an analysis of the possible gaps existing in the assistance provided in the period between emergency relief and development, taking into account information provided by Member States and relevant United Nations entities, with a view to formulating recommendations on how to address any problems identified in a systematic manner and to ensuring sustainable solutions, particularly in rehabilitation and reconstruction.

68th plenary meeting
11 December 2008